

3589  
THE  
INDISPENSABLE NECESSITY

OF

F A I T H,

IN ORDER TO THE

P L E A S I N G   G O D ;

BEING THE SUBSTANCE OF

A D I S C O U R S E,

DELIVERED AT

EYDON, in NORTHAMPTONSHIRE,

On Sunday, April 8, 1781.

---

By Francis Okely, *K*

Formerly of ST. JOHN'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE.

---

Preach the Gospel to every Creature. He that believeth,---shall  
be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.

Mark xvi. 15, 16.

*The Souls that believe,  
In PARADISE live;*

*And me, in that Number, will JESUS receive.*

Bp. Gambold.

---

N O R T H A M P T O N :

Printed by THOMAS DICEY, for the AUTHOR; and sold  
by J. LACKINGTON, No. 46, Chiswell-Street, Moorfields;  
J. DENIS and SON, No. 2, New Bridge-Street, near  
Fleet-Street, London; T. MILLS, at Bristol;  
and J. BINNS, at Leeds. 1781.

(Price Six-pence.)



## DEDICATION.

*To the dear Friend, at whose earnest Entreaty this following plain Discourse was first put down in Writing:—*

*To the other Friends, who afterwards solicited for, and promoted it's Publication in Print:—And,*

*To all sincere Christians, of every Denomination, whose Benefit and Edification in Christ have been thereby aimed at:—Yea, to ALL, without Exception, is it humbly and affectionately dedicated*

---

*By their poor Brother,*

*And willing Servant,*

*The Author.*

---



## P R E F A C E.

**T**O give no Account at all of the Birth, and Appearance of a Discourse, which, both as to Manner and Matter, is rather out of the common Track; might, perhaps, be deemed as great a Deficiency in Point of Respect to my Reader, as too minute a Detail of it might prove tedious; if not liable to be construed into an over-weening Conceit, and Fondness in the Author for his own Productions. My Wish is, neither to offend on the one Hand, or on the other.—In a Course of more than forty Years public Preaching, in a strictly *extemporaneous* Way, it has never hitherto come into my Head to put down any of my poor Discourses afterwards in Writing. For had I seen any sufficient Inducement for the Attempt, the Execution of it, with any good Degree of Accuracy, would have appeared to me as unfeasible a Task, as, in a Manner, to be obliged to tread some Miles of Ground over again in exactly the same unimprinted Footsteps.—That, now at last, I have however been led to make some Sort of an Attempt, has been wholly owing to the earnest and importunate Request of a very intimate Friend, to whom it would have been difficult to deny any Favour in my Power to grant.

I will not so far deceive my Reader as to pretend to any Thing like the Accuracy, above hinted at, either in Words, or Method. I have, in Writing this down, only followed the Clue my Heart always takes Hold of, before I begin to speak. As soon as it was finished, I read the *Manuscript* to *this* Friend; and to some few others, who, with him, had been amongst my Auditors. When they had heard it again, they were not only unanimous in Expressing their full Satisfaction with the *Sameness* of Contents, tho' twice as long; but also signified a great Desire to see it in Print: Hoping that, in this Way, it might have as striking an Effect upon others, as they professed it to have had upon themselves; both at the first Delivery, and now at Hearing the Repetition of it out of the written Copy.

For this End and Purpose then, I have been both willing and glad to comply with their Request. For to me it may be the same, whether I preach to the *Ear* from the Pulpit, or to the *Eye* out of the Closet. Each of these *Methods* have doubtless their Advantages and Disadvantages; and both may have their very good Use, with the Blessing of God.

O that no baleful Influences of *Difference in Opinion* might ever prevent our Edification in *Christ*! As I have no Interest so is it *my* Heart's Wish never to entertain the least Inclination, against the *whole Counsel of God*. Should I then, unwittingly, be any *otherwise-minded* than what belongs to the *Saving my own Soul, and them that hear me*:—Should any Thing, in this Discourse, or otherwise, have been ad-

vanced by me of a contrary Nature and Tendency;—may God be graciously pleased to *reveal*, and remove it! Certainly I love the experimental and practical Truths of his Word: And, as I wish to love *him* with all my Heart, and my *Neighbour* as myself; so would I much more willingly sit lowly down to learn at the Feet of the least *Child* of God, than ever so gloriously to enter the Lists of *doubtful Disputation* with the greatest *Champion* in Controversy.

Should any of the Masters in the *Art* of modern Preaching find, in this *Specimen* of mine, a Defectiveness of *Logic* and *Rhetoric*, according to the Standard of the present Times; I should not be at all surprized at it, it being no more than I expect: Nor have I any farther Apology to make for myself, than what our dear Saviour was pleased to make for the good Woman, who poured the aromatic Balsam on his Head, (Mark xiv. 8.) *She hath done what she could.*

But, (which is a Thing far more important to me) if, with Respect to the *Spirit* and *Soul* of the *Matter*, any discerning, friendly Child of God should see a Necessity for Wishing there had been in it more of that blessed *Anointing*, which *teacheth us all Things, and is Truth and no Lie.* (1 John ii. 27.)—I am glad of this Opportunity of being beforehand with all such, in a simple and ingenuous Acknowledgment, that I see and feel within myself abundantly more for Joining them in the same kind Wish. The Words of the Apostle Paul (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.) have long been weighty Ones to me. *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think any Thing, as of ourselves; but our Sufficiency is of God: Who also hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit: For the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life.*

Reader, I am however thankful, very thankful, for my *Little Strength*, and for that *Talent* of Grace my dear Master has given me; wishing and praying most ardently, that they may be exercised and employed to his Satisfaction, as far as the present Measure and Circumstances will allow and admit.—But, even in the Prospect of never-failing Reproach and Opposition to be thence expected, be assured, that to be *once* honoured with a *Testimony* of the Primitive Gospel of the Grace of God in *Christ Jesus*, in the full Faith and Primitive Spirit of it;—as it has been for many Years past the Desire of my Heart, so would it be the very Summit of all my highest and best Wishes here below.

In the mean Time, dear Reader, and Lover of the Truth, believe that I am thine most affectionately therein,

NORTHAMPTON,

May 28, 1783.

AP 66 Francis Okely.

THE

---

THE  
INDISPENSABLE NECESSITY  
OF  
F A I T H,  
IN ORDER TO THE  
P L E A S I N G   G O D.

---

TEXT, Hebr. xi. 6.

*Without Faith it is impossible to please God: For he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

**I**T is very evident, by the Tenor of this whole Chapter, and by all the Holy Scripture, that *Faith* and *Unbelief* have ever constituted the Characteristic Difference between the People of God, and the People of this World, in all Ages, Places, and Conditions, from *Adam* to *Moses*, from *Moses* to *CHRIST*, and from *CHRIST* to this very Day. Neither is there any Doubt, but that the very same Characteristic Difference will remain until the End of Days, when the *Foolishness* of *Believing* will appear to have been *true Wisdom*; and the *Wisdom* of *Carnal Reasoning* will discover itself to have been the *greatest Folly*, before the whole Universe.

Men may variously differ one from another, both in a civil and religious Way; but, amidst all the different Nations, Churches, and Sects of the World, the Inhabitants and Members of them all are certainly, at Bottom, but *two* Sorts only: That is, they are either merely Men of *Sense and Reason*, or Men of dominant *Faith*. With the former, *Sense and Reason* are the leading Principle; but with the

A

latter



latter, Faith with it's divine Sense and Understanding, keeps human Sense and Reason in their proper Place and Order, and under due Subjection. Where this obtains, all is as it should be, according to the blessed Creator's Will and Intention; but where this does not obtain, every Thing is inverted and perverted; how plausibly so ever Men may seem to their own-selves to live, and how wise so ever they may appear to others, as blind to the *Things of God*, as themselves. For where a divine Faith, or a simple Confidence in God, has not the Ascendancy and Lead, influencing, actuating, and directing all the Powers and Faculties of Man, the Cart is as it were set before the Horse; and, the blissful Harmony of God, being disturbed, and the divine Articulation dislocated, all is discordant and lame, whilst Sin and Misery go Hand in Hand, and reign with an uncontrouled Power.

When the blessed God first *made Man in his own Image and Likeness*, in this Condition, he pronounced his favourite Creature, *very good*. *It's Maker, who is the Lord of Hosts, and rightly called, the God of the whole Earth, was it's Husband.* (Isai. liv. 5) Now this consummate Goodness and Rectitude consisted in the very Order and Harmony we are speaking of. The God of Love, Truth, Wisdom, and Power, had then his Creature Man's unbounded Love and Confidence; which, with easy and sure Steps, directed all his Intentions and Motions which Way so ever he might have turned himself in the *Paradisical* Creation, purely according to his bountiful Creator's Will. He knew of no Sin, and was therefore equally unacquainted with every Kind and Degree of Misery. Neither one or the other *could* be any more then known to *him*, than Night and it's Darkness could have been now to *us*, if the illuminating and cheering Sun should have never set in our Horizon.



blest and comfortable Promise *John*, the beloved Disciple, was bidden to write; for these Words are true, and faithful. (Rev. xxi. 3--5.) That is, they may, amidst all the present afflictive Reign of Sin and Misery, be safely depended upon: For they will surely once come to pass.

But, as we are now speaking of the sad Fall of Man, and it's proper Cause; observe well the amazing Contrast there is between the loving and provident Inhibition, made by the God of Love and Truth on the one Hand, and the insidious Insinuations of the envious, lying, and murderous Devil on the other! God, in the greatest Sincerity of Affection towards his beloved Creature, and to forewarn it, says, *In the Day Thou eatest of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, THOU SHALT SURELY DIE.* (Gen. ii. 16, 17.) But the Devil, with a Malice, and murderous Guile peculiar to himself, as roundly contradicts it, saying, *YE SHALL not SURELY DIE: For God doth know, that in the Day ye eat thereof, then your Eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as Gods, knowing Good and Evil.* (Chapt. iii. 4, 5.) Now, which was, in this Case, to be believed? God, or the Devil? There was no other Alternative.

The Issue, or Sequel, is too well known, both historically in the Bible, and essentially within and without us all, to need any further Detail, or Comment to be made upon it. The SIN of the World, the ORIGINAL SIN was certainly *Unbelief*; over which one might weep Tears of Blood. The Heinousness of this Sin is best known to God from his own Nature, though it may be guessed at by it's dire Effects. It is the Complex, and only Ground of all other Sin: Nothing short of the all-atoning Blood of the *Lamb of God* could expiate this Sin of the World. (John i. 29.)

Had



Had our first Parents, and we really at that Time in the Loins of *Adam*, just as *Levi* paid Tithes in *Abraham*, being then in the Loins of his Father, when *MELCHISEDEC* met him; (Hebr. vii. 9, 10.) had we stood firm and unshaken in Faith and Confidence towards God; no such Sins and Calamities, as have been since experienced, and now deluge the whole World, would have ever taken Place in this sub-lunary State of Things.

But a total Ignorance, Diffidence, and Distrust of God, naturally implying as total a Confidence in our own selves, and as blind an Attachment to the Creatures, being now the unhappy State we are all born and nurtured up in; we need not wonder at the prodigious Power and Ascendancy the *Prince of Darkness*, and the *God of this World* must, through *Unbelief*, have over every Son and Daughter of *Adam* and *Eve*; and that under divers Modifications, until they are returned from proud Reasoning to humble Simplicity and to the *Obedience of Faith*, and so unto the *Christ of God*.

For our God, a God of unchangeable Love and Truth, has, (blessed be his holy Name!) not so totally forsaken his fallen Creature Man, as he deserved; Man having totally forsaken and abandoned him: Neither has he therefore left himself without a Witness, not only in that he does Good, and gives us Rain from Heaven, and fruitful Seasons, filling our Hearts with Food and Gladness; (Acts xiv. 17.) but also, in that he has put a living Witness into all our Hearts and Consciences. And this is that Light, which enlighteneth every Man that cometh into the World. (John i. 9.) Which, were it but believed in and obeyed, would infallibly lead us all back again to him from whom, as it's Source and Author, it comes. This is that Seed, that precious Seed of God,

A 3

which

which at the Beginning is *no bigger than a Grain of Mustard-Seed*; but which, if *taken, and duly put by Faith into the Field, or Garden of our Hearts*, will surely grow up spontaneously unto a very large Tree of Grace here, and of Glory hereafter. It is also internally, and in a Correspondence to the external Administrations, or Dispensations of God, *that Seed of the Woman, which will at last effectually bruise the Serpent's Head.*

All the Dispensations of God *without*, and all his secret, gracious Dealings with Men *within*, do clearly and indisputably conspire to prove him to be *still* a God of Love and Truth towards his fallen Creature Man. It all tends to illustrate and confirm the *Angelic Hymn*, (Luke ii. 14.) *Glory to God in the Highest, and on Earth Peace, Good Will towards MEN.* So does our dearest Saviour's own cheering Declaration and Testimony, (John iii. 16.) *God so loved the World, that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting Life.* For God is so far from being of a wrathful and vindictive Nature, as fallen Men and Devils are; he is so far from Desiring or Delighting in the eternal Death of any Sinner, that the same Lip of Truth and Love expressly asserts, (Verse 17.) *that God sent not his Son to CONDEMN the World, but that the World through him (through a child like Confidence in him) might be SAVED.*

To *perish*, and to be *saved* are two such Opposites, that of all others they are the most important and interesting. No Thought of Man can conceive, no Tongue express sufficiently *how* important, and *how* interesting they are. To *perish* is of all Misfortunes the greatest incident to Man. The *Fall* is, of itself, and with it's temporal Death and Concomitants, a Misfortune great enough; but the  
*Perishing,*

*Perishing*, in the second, eternal Death, is the worst of all. The present State of Mortality under the Fall is *the Knowledge of GOOD and EVIL*; and thus a *Mixture* of them both; but the State of eternal Damnation, or the *Perishing*, and *Dying* in our Sins, is a State of *pure and unmixed Evil*, in the Company of *the Devil and his Angels*, in *everlasting Fire*. (Matt. xxv. 41.) The former, being temporal, hath Hope of Cessation to mitigate it's Woe; but the latter, being eternal, hath in itself no Hope, either of Cessation, or Mitigation belonging to it. For there *their Worm dieth not, nor is their Fire quenched*. (Mark ix. 44, 46, 48.) O most alarming, because *thrice-repeated Declaration*, intended, no Doubt, to forewarn every Reader!

For, if thoughtless and unbelieving Mortals do not, during the Season of Youth, Health, and worldly Prosperity, know and consider the amazing Difference between these two ultimate States, (which as surely await every Son and Daughter of *Adam and Eve* as they are born,) certainly God himself well knows it; and as he knows, so is he desirous of Preserving every Soul of Man from such a dire Calamity, even though it were, as a Means, by the Destruction of his Body: For what is all the Evil of this World compared with the *Perishing* everlastingly? *The whole World's Gain would also be no sufficient Compensation for the Loss of the Soul*. (Matt. xvi. 26.)

Verily, it is not the *Will of our Father*, which is in Heaven, that one of his Little Ones should PERISH. (Matt. xviii. 14.) He is not willing, that ANY should PERISH; but that ALL should come to Repentance. (2 Pet. iii. 9.) Therefore also are *Supplications, Prayers, Intercessions, and Giving of Thanks* to be made for all Men—and they are good and acceptable in  
the



*the Sight of God our Saviour : Because he will have all Men to be saved, and to come to the Knowledge of the Truth. For there is one God (a God of the GENTILES as well as of the JEWS. (Rom. iii. 29 ) and one Mediator between God and Men, the Man Christ Jesus ; who gave himself a Ransom for ALL, to be testified in due Time. (1 Tim. ii. 1--6.) He is also the Propitiation, not for the Sins of them only, who already believe ; but also for the Sins of the WHOLE WORLD ; even tho' it lieth yet in Wickedness. (1 John ii. 2. v. 19.) Moreover, the Riches of God's Goodness, Forbearance, and Long-Suffering are intended to lead all Men to Repentance ; and they will do so, if they be not despised. (Rom. ii. 4.) The Saviour himself tells us (Luke xxiv. 46, 47.) that, as it behoved Christ, according to the Scriptures, to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third Day ; so also, that Repentance and Remission of Sins should be preached in his Name among all Nations, and to every Creature. (Mark xvi. 15.) God now commandeth ALL MEN everywhere to repent. (Acts xvii. 30.) Certainly then, though we are now unhappily fallen, sinful Creatures ; yet, through the free, and unmerited Goodness of God, this Mortal Life is still an accepted Time, a Day and Season of Grace, a Day of Visitation, and Salvation.*

The Reality of all this stands, with glaring Evidence, in the Scriptures of Truth ; and it farther evinces itself within every Man's Heart and Conscience, in a Way best known to God and himself, how much soever it may be *theoretically* impugned and disputed by some, and *practically* overlooked and neglected by the most : But thus it ought not to be, in either Case.

Now then, if it be the real Intention and good Purpose of God, and of every true Servant and Messenger of his, by *the Love of Christ constraining,*  
to

to lead Men to Repentance unto Salvation, (as it most assuredly is) certainly it is also the Intention and Purpose of God to have Men brought back again from a State of *Unbelief* into that of *genuine Faith* and *childlike Confidence* towards himself.

Great and furious have been, and are the Controversies about the right Meaning of the Truths of God, as they are revealed in the Bible; and that sometimes, with a bitter Zeal, even unto Blood. It has been forgotten, that *the Wrath of Man worketh not the Righteousness of God*, (James i. 20.) that *the Son of God is not come to destroy Men's Lives, but to save them*. (Luke ix. 56.) Now all the revealed Truths of God are summed up in the Person of *Christ*, and must thus necessarily be grounded in the Love of God; without which we should never have had any Revelation at all. What then can they be, or what their right Meaning, but (according to my Text) so many Incentives to our *Coming to God*, in the sure *Faith*, or Confidence, not only that he *really exists*, but also that he will as really be an ample *Rewarder of all them, that diligently seek him*? In other Words, whether Threatenings or Promises, are they not all so many Incentives to awaken, to nourish, and confirm our Faith and good Confidence in God, in such a Way as to return to him by *Christ*? If all I have said to this Effect were not true; if God had no real Will, Desire for, and Delight in the Salvation of *all Men*; certainly it could be no Sin in any Individual so to distrust it, in Respect to himself, as never to come to him. But Scripture says, (1 John v. 10, 11.) *He that believeth not God, hath made him a Liar, because he believeth not the Record that God gave of his Son. And this is the Record, that God hath given to us eternal Life; and this Life is in his Son.* Alas! we now live in the sad and *perilous Times of Degeneracy*, well nigh verging towards a  
total

total *Apostacy* from the real *Faith* of the Gospel. This the Apostle Paul has predicted, (1 Tim. iv. 1.) *In the latter Times some shall depart from the Faith, giving Heed to seducing Spirits, and Doctrines of Devils.* Doctrines, whatever they may be, certainly not tending to awaken in Men Love and Confidence towards God, but the direct contrary. *The Time*, says he farther, (2 Tim. iv. 3, 4.) *will come, when Men will not endure SOUND DOCTRINE*, (Doctrine tending to the Health of their Souls; Doctrine encouraging them to come, by a real Conversion, to God; Doctrine, containing the internal Truth, as it is in Jesus) *but after their own Lusts (the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life, (1 John ii. 16.) they shall heap to themselves Teachers, having itching Ears (after vain Philosophy, or worldly Wisdom, puzzling, disputable Notions set off with Logic and Oratory, disclaimed by Paul, 1 Cor. i. ii. &c.) And they shall turn away their Ears from the Truth, leading to God, and shall be turned unto Fables, or vain Notions consistent with the Love of the World and the Things thereof, in Despite of the Love of God. He also tells us, (2 Thess. ii. 3.) That the Day of our crucified Lord's Return will not come, except it be preceded by a Falling away, an APOSTACY, from the Faith.*

It is with Respect to this Time, no Doubt, which many evident *Signs* in the present State of the Christian World sufficiently indicate to be already come, and coming, that our blessed Lord puts the justly - alarming Question, (Luke xviii. 8.) *Whether, when the Son of Man cometh, he shall find Faith on Earth?* Which Faith, whether it respects the particular One of his Coming at that Crisis, or the general Faith in his Person, and in the saving Truths of God, spiritually revealed, or both, confirms the *Degeneracy* and *Apostacy* of which I am now treating,



treating, in all the main Lines of it; because, amongst all the other Signs of the Declension of *Primitive Faith*, this sure Concomitant of it is hardly any where to be now met with,—*waiting for the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* (1 Cor. i. 7.)

By the Observation of many Years past, I have found, that Men now-a-Days by *Faith* commonly understand a *reasoned Thing* only; that is certain so called Orthodox Systems, Confessions, Tenets, or Notions, which the merely natural, human Understanding leads different Churches, Sects, and Parties to fabricate and adopt, with endless Variance, out of the Letter of the Holy Scripture. They seem to have forgotten, that as *the LETTER killeth, so is it the SPIRIT only, which giveth Life.* (2 Cor. iii. 6.) Now, as many Men may have many Minds in all other human Things; so have they in *this Sort of Faith* likewise, although the true and living Heart's Faith is, and must be, but *one* in all. (Eph. iv. 5.)

And sure I am, that whatsoever rational and literal Truth or Falsehood there may be in such humanly devised and fabricated Platforms, Confessions, or Systems of Faith so called, (which it is not now my Business to investigate, and decide upon in this Place) yet is the Scripture-Heart's-Faith the only true one, and the most simple Thing in the World. It belongs—(I say) to the Heart of Man; nor has his Head any Thing further to do with it than as it originates from and connects with the Heart. As the Reality of a Map is only to be found in the Country it describes, so is that of the Bible only to be realized in the Heart of Man.

*Faith*, according to the Apostle's Definition, or Description of it in the first Verse of this Chapter, is the *Substance of Things hoped for, the Evidence of Things*

*Things not seen.* If so, it can have no Existence in any wicked Man, how learned so ever he may be in Theology, or otherwise : And wheresoever it really exists, and in Proportion to the Degree of it's Existence, it will be found ever active, or operative, not in violent and virulent Contentions, and Controversies about *particular* Notions and Opinions, Forms and Ceremonies, whether literally and outwardly true or false ; but in Love and it's Works ; or in such a practical Way, as this whole Chapter, in a summary View, sets before our Eyes. It will instigate us to please God by a sure Trust, and Confidence in his divine and gracious Leading of us through all the trying Vicissitudes of this mortal Life. For, if every Thing, even to a poor insignificant Sparrow's Falling to the Ground, befalls *us* under the Order, and according to the Appointment of God our heavenly Father's Will ; surely, in every State and Condition, and in all Circumstances, we ought to acknowledge *him*, and learn to comport with him therein in such a Manner, that God himself, our own Conscience, and even the observant and impartial World may see and be convinced, that from an unbounded Confidence in his Mercy and Goodness, we evidently give *him* the Preference ; venturing all upon him, even where common Sense and Reason would otherwise dictate quite another Sort of Lesson and Conduct. This is *that* Faith, which in Proportion to it's Pleasing God, must needs displease and chagrin the Devil. For if a divine Faith has once got in us the Superiority over Sense and Reason, it has at the same Time the Superiority and Ascendancy over *him* too ; seeing that these, being now under the Fall, his Workshop and Implements, his entire Force lies in them. *Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the World ; and this is the Victory that overcometh the World, even our FAITH. Who is he that overcometh the World, but he that*

*that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?* (1 John v. 4, 5.) Therefore he that is overcome by the World, let him believe whatever else he will, doth certainly not yet, from the Heart believe, that *Jesus is the Son of God*. He only *fancies*, that he believes it. His Faith is a *chimerical* one. A worldly Spirit is therefore, notwithstanding all it's *Orthodoxy*, the greatest of all *Hereses*.

Amongst the harsh and jarring Contenders for *beloved Opinions* only, under the Name of *Faith*, we see them all in different Ways, so overcome by the World, that what a great and discerning Man writes is but too plainly verified before our Eyes. 'Papists and Protestants (ay, and the different Denominations of Protestantism too) are hating, fighting, and killing one another for the Sake of their *different* excellent Opinions; and yet, as to the *Lusts of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eyes, and the Pride of Life*, they are in the highest Union and Communion with one another.' (*Law's Address, P. 58.*)

From all which, taken together, it is previously evinced, that what our Text asserts doth, like all the other Scriptures, evince it's Truth in Fact; viz. that *without Faith* (a living, loving, *Primitive Faith* in the Heart) *it is impossible to please God; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is; and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Certainly then, whatever may be the Church, or Sect, any so-called *Christian* may be an outward Member of; whatever his Opinions, or Notions about the Religion of *Christ* may be; whatever the Forms and Ceremonies are, under which he chooses outwardly to worship God; yet can no Man, after all, truly please God; or really, as *Enoch* did, walk in Fellowship with him in *Christ*, without such a



Faith as reposes an unbounded Trust, or Confidence in his divine Leading, from first to last. Well might our Saviour's Primitive Members go under the Denomination of *Believers*; for the Church of *Christ*, like that of the *Old Testament*, is properly a SCHOOL OF FAITH, that being the great Lesson of it, from Form to Form. *The Righteousness of God* (says St. Paul) *is revealed from Faith to Faith*, (Rom. i. 17.) As God put faithful *Abraham* to the Test; so, in a Manner and at a Time best known to himself, shall we also be taken with *Temptations*, or Trials of Faith, according to the Measure thereof bestowed upon us. For *God is faithful, who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able; but will, with the Temptation, also make a Way to escape, that we may be able to bear it.* (1 Cor. x. 13.) St. Peter says, *we are kept, by the Power of God, through Faith, unto Salvation:—In which, though greatly rejoicing upon the Whole; yet, for a Season, (if Need be) we are in Heaviness through manifold Temptations; that the Trial, or Test of our Faith, being much more precious than of Gold that perisheth, though it be tried with Fire, might be found unto Praise and Honour, and Glory at the Appearing of Jesus Christ.* (1 Pet. i. 5--7.)

Now, because an occasional, and particular Remark upon the Testimony given to *Enoch*, of his having pleased God, seems, by our Text, to be turned into a general one, upon the very Nature and Necessity of Faith for the same Purpose, in all other Cases; because also, in Reference to the entire Company of *Faith's Worthies*, recounted in this Chapter, the very first Dawning, or Beginning of Faith within the Heart, is declared to consist of such a Belief of God's Existence, as draws us to come to, and makes us seek him diligently:—We will also make this the Ground-Work of all that shall be further said here concerning Faith, in Prosecution of the Text.

He

*He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him.*

Certainly the Negative is implied in the positive Part of the Text, and may help to illustrate it. Let us then contrast it in the following Manner.

If a Man doth *not* come to God, it can only be ascribed to a Want of Faith in his Existence; on which Account also, he does not think it worth his While diligently to seek him.

For, let a Man be ever so illiterate, or ever so great a Scholar in every Branch of human Literature; yet, if he does not come to God; if he does not think it worth his While to seek him, with the same earnest Diligence with which he pursues after all earthly Things he deems of any Weight and Consequence, giving God the Preference to all other worldly Considerations;—certainly he doth not *glorify him as God*; nor can his Conduct be ascribed to any other Cause than to that secret *Dislike of Retaining God in his Knowledge*; which, by fair Implication, the Scripture construes to be *Atheism*.

On the other Hand, every Person also that cometh to God, or maketh the very first Essay towards Conversion, could not do it but in Consequence of an internal Heart's Conviction, or a Belief of the Reality of God's Existence.

Such an Heart's-Conviction, or Belief as this, is of a very different Nature from the common, rational, or *Metaphysical* Notion of God's Existence; which is best demonstrated by the Effects of both; the former being something like the real Appearance of the Sun, after a cold and cloudy Day; and the other like a very fine Picture of it, drawn, perhaps,

by one of the first Artists in this Way: The one is attended with cheering *Effects*, the other with empty, useless *Admiration* only.

Every Man, how wise soever in this World, has in Scripture-Stile no better an Appellation than that of a *Fool*, if he has not a real Knowledge and Belief of God in his Heart. *The Fool hath said in his Heart, there is no God.* (Psal. xiv. 1. liii. 1.) And though many such profess that they know God, at the same Time that by *Works* they deny him; (Tit. i. 16.) yet David says again (Psal. xxxvi. 1.) *The Transgression of the Wicked saith within my Heart, there is no Fear of God before his Eyes:* Which is tantamount to *Atheism*.

Perhaps no Part of Holy Writ can explain this Matter, to the very Bottom of it, better than Rom. i. 18, &c. We have there the true Nature and Ground of a damnable Unbelief pointed out to us. *Men* (says the Apostle) *held (or detained) the Truth in Unrighteousness.* What Truth is this? Certainly that, which may be initially known of God, in the Heart and Conscience. Because, proceeds he, *that which may be known of God was manifest in them; by internal Revelation, no Doubt, for God hath shewed it unto them.* But, *because when they thus knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful, but became vain in their Imaginations, and their foolish Heart was darkened: Professing themselves to be wise (Philosophers) they became Fools—God gave them up to Uncleanliness—And, even as they did not like to retain God in their Knowledge, putting out the divine Light, which had so far imparted it to them, God gave them over to a reprobate Mind; or to their own vain Ratiocinations, which they preferred to the substantial Light and Truth of God.*

Yea,



Yea, and to this very Day, Truth obliges us to assert, that the merely-rational Knowledge of God, without a Degree of a divine and internal Revelation of him in the Heart and Conscience, is not only a poor, lean, flimsy, and ineffectual Thing; but is, moreover, like an *Ignis fatuus*, or Jack-a-Lantern; which only serves to mislead us too into such Bogs and Sloughs, as are spiritually and morally described to the End of the Chapter.

Plain it therefore is, from this Passage above-cited, that God has enstamped the Hearts of all Men with a certain *instinctive Sense* of his own Existence. And this is *that true Light, which, though shining in the Darknefs of Men, is not, however, comprehended by the Darknefs*. And yet it is of the utmost Consequence to them to discern, to admit, and to obey it. To do otherwise, or to reject and extinguish it, is *to hold the Truth in Unrighteousness*; and will prove *their Condemnation*, or the proper and immediate Cause of their Perishing eternally. *This is the Condemnation, that Light is come into the World, and Men loved Darknefs rather than Light, because their Deeds were evil.* (Joh. iii. 19.) Whoever then does this, let him, at the same Time, profess to know God with ever so much *Metaphysical Nicety*, yet will his Works always deny him. So true is that of the Apostle Paul, (Eph. ii. 12.) *Without Christ, without God, or ATHEISTS, in the World.*

But, by his own Light within the Heart, to believe that God is, proves the very first Ground and Motive to *fear him*; which *Fear is the Beginning of Wisdom*, seeing that thereby *Men depart from Evil*. (Prov. i. 7. ix. 10. xvi. 6.) So that this is the very first Principle of our Conversion, or of our Coming to God. It is no merely rational, or *Metaphysical Notion*, but a *living Sense* of God's Existence and

divine Presence within; prompting us to seek him *diligently*, maugre all the innumerable Discouragements and contrary Suggestions injected by the Devil, too commonly fostered by Flesh and Blood, and confirmed by the perverse Reasonings, and evil Examples of the World.

Now, if this be the Case, as it most assuredly is, how *few* are there comparatively, who can be said with any Propriety to be possessed, even of the very first Degree of genuine Faith; that Faith, which *REALLY* believes, *that God is, and that he is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him?*

How often do the Scriptures, both of the Old and New Testament, exhort us to *seek after God*; and to seek after him with a *Diligence*, *Affiduity*, and *Resolution* some Way proportionable to *his own* unparalleled Excellency; and to the supereminent Benefits, both temporal and spiritual, which will be sure, by indefeasible Promise, to accrue to *us* from so doing! The Apostle Paul tells us (Acts xvii. 26--28.) That God has made of one Blood all Nations of Men for to dwell on all the Face of the Earth; and that he has determined the Times before appointed, and the Bounds of their Habitation; that they should seek the Lord, if haply they might feel after him and find him; though he be not far from every one of us, seeing that in him we live, move, and have our Being. To seek the Lord, and to seek him diligently, being then the very End of our Existence in this World, should be also the first and principal Business of our Lives; seeing that Time and Place have been so especially provided for it, by our most gracious God, even before we were born. Well therefore might our blessed Saviour say, (Matt. vii. 7, 8.) *Ask, and it shall be given you, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you: Seeing that every one that asketh*  
*receiveth,*

*receiveth, and he that seeketh findeth, and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.* Upon the sure Ground of which, a great Man in the Church of God doth not scruple to assert, that ‘ if any Man really and earnestly seeketh the Lord, let him set about it ever so dexterously, or ever so awkwardly ; yet, having truly and diligently sought, he shall at last be sure to find him.’ Which Assertion Experience will, I believe, justify and confirm in every Case, sooner or later. Therefore says our Saviour again, (Matt. vi. 33.) *Seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his Righteousness, and all other Things (pertaining to Life and Godliness) shall be added unto you.* And though there is a verbal Contradiction to this infallible Success of Seeking, occurring (Luke xiii. 24.) where many are said to seek to enter in at the strait Gate, without being able to effect it; yet is the Seeking in this Place not the same with my Text, and with the other Passages alledged ; it is a Seeking, not first but as it were by the Bye, in a lazy, perfunctory Way, without the requisite *Diligence* : For it stands evidently contradistinguished, or contrasted, with the *Striving*, or the *AGONIZING* to enter in at this strait Gate. Otherwise the Scriptures every where furnish us with such exceeding great and precious Promises, joined to Exhortations given to all earnest and sincere Seekers after God, that it is not possible they should miss of Finding him, and of Finding him also a generous Rewarder of the Pursuit. He will make such Partakers of his own divine Nature ; after their having first, in the State of such a right and earnest Seeking, escaped the Corruptions, which are in the World through Lust. (2 Pet. i. 4.)

Thus then to seek God in so resolute and effectual a Manner as to find him, will prove infinitely more worth our While than all other, common Pursuits whatsoever ; even though by them we might



might attain all the Honours, Riches, and Pleasures of this transitory Life. And, if we cannot practically give God *this Preference*, let us profess whatever else we will, and be ever such able Dealers in literary Sophistry; yet is not, after all, so much as the Mustard-Seed of true Faith yet sown in the Garden of our Heart.

But *how* do we come to this true Faith, and diligent Seeking? Is it the Effect of our own Wisdom and Efforts? The Answer to this Question has been anticipated already, when the divine Light and Seed have been spoken of. But we will more explicitly and determinately say, that no Man is *the first* to think of God in this believing and diligently seeking Manner. The Word, the living Word, and Call of God, which awakens the Dead in Trespases and Sins, must first reach and touch the Heart in a preventing Way; to *us* secret, but well known to *God*, and sufficiently distinguishable by its superior Energy and Effect. *The Wind of regenerating Grace bloweth where it listeth, the Sound whereof we hear, tho' we cannot tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth.* (John iii. 8.) *The Souls first dead to God in Sin, though alive in the World, as well as their dead Bodies hereafter, hear the Voice of the Son of God, and live.* (Chapt. v. 25.) *Many are so called, but few are chosen; because few prove so obedient to the heavenly Call and Visitation as to become chosen Ones; that is, faithful, and approved Disciples and Followers of Jesus.* (Rev. xvii. 14.) *or such as obtain the Prize of the High Calling of God in Christ Jesus, thus making their Calling and Election sure.* *Jesus said to such Jews as believed on him, or were under this first Call from his Word, If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my Disciples indeed. And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free:—Free from the Slavery of Sin, which is Freedom*

*dom indeed.* (John viii. 30--36.) Important are the Apostle's Words, (1 Cor. ix. 24.) and here very pertinent, *Know ye not that they which run in a Race, run all, but one receiveth the Prize? So run that ye may obtain.* The Meaning of which is, that whereas but *one* can in a Race obtain the Prize, therefore it behoveth all the Competitors to exert themselves to the utmost to be *that One*. Now though this is not however strictly a Parallel Case with the Christian Race; because *all* the Competitors may there obtain the Prize: Yet is there an exact Parallelism lying in the *Difficulty* of Obtaining in both Cases; which therefore makes the Apostle add, *So run that ye may obtain*: Or begin, continue, and end your Christian Race in such a Manner, that you may obtain the *elect State*, or the *Palm and Crown of Glory*. See Rev. vii. 9--17. 2 Esdras (though Apocryphal) well expresses the same, Chapt. ii. 42--47.

Perhaps there is not a *Point* in all the Holy Scriptures, which is by our Saviour, and by his Apostles more urged, and in a greater Variety of Ways, than *this*. When, (Luke xiii. 23, 24.) the Disciples (in a View possibly to 2 Esdras ix. 15, 21, 22, &c. or to what our Saviour himself might have occasionally dropped on the same Subject) put the Question to him, *Lord, are there few that be saved?* his Answer is purely practical, and perfectly of a Piece with *Paul's* *So run, that YE may obtain.* Strive, (agonize) says he, *to enter in at the strait Gate; for MANY, I say unto you, shall seek (carelessly and indifferently) to enter in, and shall not be able.* The emphatical and minute Description our Saviour gives concerning the Process of the Word of God, under the Parable of the Sower, turns upon the very same Hinge, and presses the same important Point. We have this Parable, (Matt. xiii. 3--8.) and it's Explanation, from Verse 18--23. compared with

with the Parallel Passages. We there find it is the *same Word*, or Call of God, as well in the three different Sorts of Soils, or Hearts, within which it proves abortive, as in the other fourth Soil, or in the honest and good Heart, wherein it comes to the Maturity of Regeneration; fructifying thirty, sixty, and an hundred Fold, in Proportion to the Honesty and Goodness of the Subject, or Heart wherein it is sown. Thus, upon the same Ground, we meet with an earnest Exhortation of our Saviour, (Matt. vii. 13, &c.) *To enter in at the strait Gate, for the Gate, says he, is wide, and the Way broad, that leadeth to Destruction, and many go in thereat.* It is commodious to the Natural Man; whereas *strait is the Gate, and narrow is the Way, which leadeth unto Life*, the Life of Regeneration in *Christ* here, in Order to the heavenly, eternal Life hereafter: *Which therefore FEW find.* And we are withal enjoined to *beware of false Prophets*; who, by their flattering Doctrines, greatly contribute to render the Number of Finders *so few*. In direct Opposition to *them*, and to every other Obstacle, our dear Lord gives us the very best Advice, (Matt. v. 29, 30. xviii. 8, 9. Mark ix. 43--47.) that if any Thing as dear and useful to us as an Eye, a Hand, or Foot, *should offend us*, that is, should prove an Obstruction to our Progress towards the regenerate and eternal Life, we should *pluck out the one, and cut off the other*, without any farther Ceremony: Which means, no Doubt, that we are to part with the Allurement of them forthwith, under the most painful Degree of Self-Denial, rather than to incur *Hell-Fire*; where their *Worm dieth not, and their Fire is not quenched.* This also elucidates and enforces Matt. xi. 12. Where *the Kingdom of God, or the Regenerate Life*, (John iii. 3, 5.) *from the Days, or Dispensation of John the Baptist*, is said to *suffer Violence, and the Violent take it by the Force* of irresistible Resolution.

All



All which, taken together, plainly indicate the Meaning of our blessed Lord's repeated Asseveration, that *Many are called, but few chosen*; intended, no Doubt, to stir us all up to follow our Call of Grace in such a Manner as to attain the State of God's Chosen Ones; which are his faithful and approved Disciples, Followers, and Members.

Before this Call of God is, according to his own divine Wisdom and Purpose, made, Men of every Description remain merely natural, governed, in the main Drift of their Lives, by mere Sense and Reason, thus following the Desires of the Flesh and of the Mind. The Devil, *the God and Prince of this World*, has then a full and uncontrouled Possession of them in his earthly Kingdom of this World. He is that *strong Man armed, who keepeth his Palace* of the human Heart and Mind, *possessing his Goods*, the Thoughts, Words, and Works of Men, *in Peace*: But when Christ, a stronger than he comes upon him, (*Greater is He that is in you than he that is in the World.* (1 John. iv. 4.) then is it certainly God's Design, with Man's Concurrence and Co-operation under this Grace, to have him overcome, to have *all his Armour, wherein he trusted*, the carnal Imaginations and Ratiocinations, *taken from him*; and to have *his Spoils divided*. (Luke xi. 21, 22.)

But till this Stronger than He cometh in Spirit, no human Logic, Rhetoric, and Philosophy; no, nor the nicest Divinity-Predaching, has any more Effect upon the Heart of Man, than a Straw would have for an Attack, or Cannon without Ball, to take an invested City. Satan and his evil Angels are all as well acquainted with this *Difference*, as the Governor of such a Town would soon perceive the same. *Jesus I know, and Paul I know* (said the Evil Spirit) *but who are ye?* (Acts xix. 15.) And  
to

to this very Day they well know the Difference between the best and most elegant Words, without Spirit, Heart, and Meaning, and such as in the Spirit come from the Heart to the Heart. *Tarry ye in Jerusalem, till ye be endued with Power from on High.* (Luke xxiv. 49.) *Not that we are sufficient of ourselves;—but our Sufficiency is of God; who also hath made us able Ministers of the New Testament, not of the Letter, but of the Spirit; for the Letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth Life.* (2 Cor. iii. 5, 6.)

But now to resume and prosecute that Part of our Text, which respects our first Coming to God upon a true Belief of his Existence, &c. we will suppose, with the Apostle *Paul*, (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.) that some Person, either by Design or Accident, should come into a truly Christian Assembly, gathered in the Name of the Lord; where of Course the *living Word of God* would be preached from the Heart to the Heart: In such a Case the Party supposed would surely be so *convinced and judged by all* he heard and saw there; and *the Secrets of his Heart would be made so manifest, that he would* (in Spirit at least, if not externally) *fall down on his Face, worship God*, from a true Acknowledgment of his Presence, and say, that, in and amongst that *People*, so assembled together, *was God himself of a Truth.*

In such a Way as this, through the Preaching of the Gospel, in *Demonstration of the Spirit and of Power*, were Souls, in the Primitive Times, brought to an awakened Sense of God's Existence, and to the real Knowledge of his Son *Jesus Christ*: And thus hath it been from that Day to this ever since, in divers other Ways, in all Places, and amongst all Denominations of Christians, when the living Word of God hath been preached, and the Call of God to the Heart and Conscience given. The  
Proof

Proof of God's Presence has been the Conviction and Conversion of Sinners from the World, the Flesh, and the Devil, unto God; and their real Edification in *Christ*. And where these *Effects* are wanting, their *Cause* may be well deemed to be wanting too; even though a Semblance of Worship and Preaching be still kept up with ever so much Plausibility of Scripture-Words and Forms. Where God's Presence is not operative, certainly there can be no true Worship of him. *Lo, I am with you alway, even unto the End of the World.* (Matt. xxviii. 20.)

Moreover, where *Christ*, our Saviour is, and really works in the Power of his own Spirit, there will Matt. x. 34, &c. be verified, *Think not that I am come to send Peace on Earth, I came not to send Peace, but a Sword. For I am come to set a Man at Variance against his Father, and the Daughter against her Mother, and the Daughter-in-Law against her Mother-in-Law: And a Man's Foes shall be they of his own Household.*

Long Experience has furnished me with the following Observation. Great is the Enmity of contending Sects one against another, about the Notions and Forms of their Religion. Yet may *this* in some good Degree be softened and moderated by the Admission of sober Reflection. But the Enmity of them all, as Sects, against the Power of Religion itself, is an absolutely irreconcilable one. As *Herod* and *Pilate*, though at Enmity before, were made Friends together against *Christ* in the Flesh; so now wherever He appears in Spirit, all the *unconverted* BIGOTS of every Denomination will for a Time drop their Animosities one against another, and combine together against *him*. An united Cry will be set up, perfectly correspondent to what we read of against our Saviour's own Person in the Gospel, of *Dehusion*,  
C Error,



*Error, Schism, Heresy, Enthusiasm, Fanaticism, and, what not?—Here is no Quarter given, here are no Measures kept. Men may be whatsoever else they will, and go whithersoever else they like, rather than have any Thing to do with this Way, wherein Christ himself appears; which will be sure to be a Sect every where spoken against. (Acts xxviii. 22.) Ye shall be hated of all Nations, and Denominations, for my Name's Sake. (Matt. xxiv. 9.)*

In this Case, then, we often find the Husband embittered against his Wife: And, (how strange is the Expression of it every-where in Vogue!) he will ‘cut her Legs off before she shall go to such or such a Place, or have any Connection with such or such Persons.’ Neither are many Wives a Whit behind-hand, in the same Way, and with the indecent Authority they usurp over their awakened Husbands. In the same Manner, and for the same Cause, we find Parents set against their own Children, and the Children too against their Parents; especially when it so happens, that either the one or the other are any Ways dependent upon each other. Masters and Mistresses hate, harass, oppress, and turn off otherwise good Servants, for no other Offence than *that* of their Love to the living Gospel, and the Persons amongst whom it is preached. Landlords disquiet, threaten, and even turn out their good and innocent Tenants, for no other Cause. Customers forsake the Shops of honest Tradesmen, and will no more employ faithful Workmen and Labourers, for the same Offence. Ay, it has happened, and may happen again, (blessed be God that it is not so now in our Nation!) that Kings, and Governors set in Authority under them, have, with the plausible Pretext of Law, persecuted and grievously afflicted loyal, good, and useful Subjects, unto Confiscation of Goods, Imprisonment  
of

of Body, and even Loss of Life, for no other real Offence, but *that* of the Gospel of *Christ*.

Now, amidst Circumstances more or less like these, where *Persecution, Tribulation, and Affliction* arise because of the *Word*, or Call of God, the Hearers thereof are put to the Test, as to the Depth of Root it hath taken in them; and whether it be so far, that, in the true Faith of God's Existence, and Rewarding those that diligently seek him, they can be resolutely determined to *love the Praise of God, more than that of Men*; and to *obey God, rather than Men*. They are put hereby to the Test, whether the *Reproach of Christ* is now to them, as it heretofore was to *Moses*, more than the *Treasures of the Egypt of this World*. Whether they are worthy of *Christ*, by not *Loving Husband, or Wife, Son or Daughter, House or Land, &c.* more than him. Whether they will *confess themselves Strangers and Pilgrims on Earth*: Whether they will *take joyfully the Spoiling of their Goods, knowing in themselves, that they have in Heaven a better and an enduring Substance; a City, which hath Foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God*: Whether *Christ's Capital Doctrine of SELF-DENIAL* be, in it's utmost Latitude, so agreeable to them, that, at his Command, and according to his Example, they can resolve to *take up their Cross, and follow him to Gethsemane, to Mount Golgotha, and into the Grave*; that thus in Heart suffering together, they may also rise again together, with him, to the Newness of a really regenerated Life in God. Here, I say, we are put to the Test, whether our Faith in God's Existence, &c. be a mere Pretence, Fancy, and Chimera, or a divine Reality. The State of the *Christian Church* could once warrant the following Declaration; and it may, under the Renovation of the Gospel-Spirit, again happen to be the same Case with it, *If in this Life only we have*

*Hope in Christ, we are of all Men most miserable.*  
(1 Cor. xv. 19.)

Which entire State of *real* Christianity was, (by the Way) in the *Apostolic* Times, *emblematically* signified by the initiating Ordinance of BAPTISM: But which is now no longer generally practised, even in the same true *Mode*; since the *essential* Defect of Primitive Faith has so long defeated the Primitive Gift and Powers of the Holy Ghost upon every *believing Subject* of it. The Truth of which, and the Powers themselves, may be read of in all the New Testament; but more particularly, Acts xix. 1.-7. Rom. vi. 3.-11, &c. &c. This will also elucidate that otherwise obscure Passage, (1 Cor. xv. 29.) which might be better rendered from the *Original* thus, *Otherwise what will be the Case with them, who are baptized for Dead, if the Dead do not ENTIRELY rise again? Why are they then baptized for Dead?* Every Primitive Believer in *Christ* was baptized for Dead; dead in Soul, and dead Body; and, by Faith, in a once dead, buried, and afterwards risen *Jesus*, as the *First-Fruits*, he expected his own *entire* Resurrection too, in *both*.—Most harmonious is the Scripture with itself!—But to proceed:

This then is the *strait Gate*, and the *narrow*, or afflicted, *Way*) leading to Regeneration, which so *few* in Fact find. But why *so few*? Is it because God has, perhaps, from all Eternity decreed the *most* never shall?—No such Thing has been ever said to this Effect by *Christ* himself, or is fairly deducible from any Thing the *Apostles* ever taught after him.—But *why* then? Because having no Mind for it, neither have Men Faith, Courage, and Resolution enough to break through all the Difficulties, Obstructions, and Entanglements, which Satan, the  
World,



World, and our own depraved Flesh and Blood will be sure to cast in the Way. Also, because so few Ministers are, in our Days, so much in Earnest about it themselves as to *stir up Men's pure Minds by Way of Remembrance: And besides this* (says a Primitive Witness *of the Sufferings of Christ*) *add to your Faith Virtue, or Courage, &c.—for if these Things be in you and abound—if you so make your Calling and Election sure; if you do these Things, ye shall never fall: For so an Entrance shall be administered to you abundantly, into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* (2 Pet. i. 5--13.) Or, if any, whether Preacher or Hearer, feels his Want and Weakness of Faith, (as who does not more or less?) why will he not, instead of Pleading this and that, in a futile Manner, for Excuse, take our Saviour's Advice; which is to ask for the Holy Spirit, and the Gift of Faith of him, who never denies it to any, who thus in good Earnest solicit him for it. (Matt. vii. 7--12. Luke xi. 1--13. James i. 5--7.) *Lord, I believe, help thou my Unbelief,* is already an excellent Beginning. (Mark ix. 24.)

We have also this further great Encouragement and Support. Our dearest Saviour, who is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life*, did, in his own holy Humanity, as the *second Adam*, walk in this Path of Faith in God from his Manger-Cradle to the Cross. He shewed us the Meaning of the Doctrine he preached concerning Self-Denial and Taking up the Cross, by his own instructive Example. Which now both call upon us to take up our's in the same Faith, and to follow him whithersoever he shall be pleased to lead us; if we really mean to be his *true Disciples* in this World, and to live with him in Glory in that which is to come. How clear and plain are his Words to this Effect in both the following emphatical Passages,

*And there went great Multitudes with him; (the nominal Christians are now also a great Multitude indeed!) and he turned and said unto them (the same has for many Years past been done, and will probably be more so in our Age) If any Man come to me, and hate not his Father and Mother, and Wife, and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, yea, and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple. For which of you, intending to build a Tower, sitteth not down first, and counteth the Cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it? Lest haply, after he has laid the Foundation, and is not able to finish it, all that behold it begin to mock him: Saying, this Man began to build, and was not able to finish. Or what King, going to make War against another, sitteth not down first, and consulteth, whether he be able with ten thousand to meet him that cometh against him with twenty thousand? Or else, whilst the other is yet a great Way off, he sendeth an Ambassage, and desireth Conditions of Peace. So likewise whosoever he be of you, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my Disciple. (Luke xiv. 25--33.)*

*And again: Verily, verily I say unto you, except a Corn of Wheat fall into the Ground and die, it abideth alone; but, if it die, it bringeth forth much Fruit. He that loveth his Life shall lose it; and he that hateth his Life in this World shall keep it unto Life eternal. If any Man serve me, let him follow me; and where I am, there shall also my Servant be: If any Man serve me, him will my Father honour. (John xii. 24--26.)*

The very End and Design of all the *Apostolic* Epistles, of this to the *Hebrews*, and of this whole *x<sup>th</sup>* Chapter in particular, is to set before our Eyes, and then to encourage us to walk courageously in the same Path, and to run the same Race of Faith inculcated upon us by our Saviour's Prescript and Example. *Being then* (says the Author, Chapt. xii.

1, 2.) compassed about with so great a Cloud of Witnesses, let us lay aside every Weight, and the Sin, (of Unbelief) which doth so easily beset us; and let us run with Patience the Race set before us. Looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our Faith; who, for the Joy that was set before HIM, endured the Cross, despising the Shame, and is set down at the Right Hand of the Throne of God. Which plainly indicates, that it is now our Time and Turn, in the Kingdom and Patience of Jesus, to suffer with him, that we may also reign with him; to overcome the World with him, that we may sit with him in his Throne, even as he also overcame, and is set down with his Father in his Throne. (2 Tim. ii. 12. Rev. iii. 21.)

Nor is there any Doubt to be made, but that, if we could pursue the Thread of a genuine ECCLESIASTICAL HISTORY of the New Testament-Times; we should find it a Continuation of the same Cloud of Truth's Witnesses, as is here recounted in a summary Way. For the Blessed God has been all along, to this very Day, and will ever remain, a living God; both in the common providential Course of this World; and in that of his Church too, by his Holy Spirit's divine and gracious Operations upon the Hearts of Men, redeemed by the precious Blood of his own Son. So that, if it be true, that Miracles are actually ceased, it is not because God has himself, in his Word, prefixed any Term for their Cessation; but, because the Faith of Men has ceased. Our Blessed Saviour, without specifying for what Number of Centuries it should continue, says expressly, (Mark xvi. 17.) *These Signs shall follow them that believe, in my Name they shall cast out Devils; they shall speak with new Tongues; they shall take up Serpents; and, if they drink any deadly Thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay Hands on the Sick, and they shall recover.* Wherefore, if the noble Works,



‘ Works, which we have heard with our Ears, and  
 ‘ our Fathers have declared unto us, as done in their  
 ‘ Days, and in the old Time before them,’ have  
 not been *so generally* done in ours, the Defect can be  
 ascribed to Nothing else, but purely to the Want  
 of *Primitive FAITH* in *modern Times*. Otherwise  
*the Lord’s Hand is not now shortened, that he cannot save;*  
*neither his Ear heavy, that he cannot hear; but our*  
*Iniquities have separated between us and our God;* and  
 particularly may our *Unbelief* be also said to have  
 caused, that *no mighty Works could be wrought amongst*  
 us, as heretofore amongst our *Fore-Fathers*. (Isai.  
 lix. 1, 2. Matt. xiii. 58.) By our strong Attach-  
 ment to *Reason* in *Despise of Faith*, we have more  
 of *IDOLATRY* amongst us, than is commonly sus-  
 pected. Whereby then the *true God* seems to be  
 turned by us into another *Baal*; who is now at an  
 immense Distance from us, and too much otherwise  
 engaged with his own Affairs to regard ours, as  
 once in Old Time. (1 Kings xviii. 27.) But,  
 alas! this seeming Distance and Estrangedness are  
 wholly on *our Side*, and all the mere Effect and na-  
 tural Consequence of our *own* foolishly-wise Un-  
 belief.

The very Controversies in *Christendom*, and par-  
 ticularly that Capital One about *Justification*, whether  
 by Faith alone, or by Works previous to Faith,  
 originate altogether from this Heart’s Idolatry. They  
 are so many pregnant Proofs of God’s Absence from  
 us by our own Absence from him, thro’ Unbelief.  
 And I have long been assured, that, at the Return  
 of *Primitive Heart’s Faith*, all the Truths and  
 Realities of God’s Word will return, as the Leaves  
 in Spring, along with it; and all hurtful Errors  
 drop off of themselves, like the Leaves in Autumn.

Now might I, with singular Propriety, take up  
 every

every Instance of Faith in this Chapter, beginning with *Abel*, and ending with the End of the *Jewish* Old Testament-History; they being all so many Exemplifications of the Reality and Power of Faith: But my Time will not now admit me thus to dilate my Subject. Yet am I much inclined to trespass so far upon your Patience as to speak a few Words upon three of these WORTHIES OF FAITH.

The *First* shall be *David*, in his Combat with *Goliath*: The *Second* Daniel's Preservation in the Lion's Den: And the *Third* the Deliverance of *Shadrach*, *Mesbach*, and *Abednego*, from the Midst of a burning, fiery Furnace. All this was effected by Faith alone: Thereby *David waxed valiant in Fight, and turned to Flight the Armies of the Aliens: Daniel stopped the Mouths of Lions: Shadrach, Mesbach, and Abednego, quenched the Violence of Fire.* (Ver. 32--34.)—Wonderful Effects of Faith indeed!—We will begin with *David*.

When the *Gigantic* Stature, the enormous Strength, and formidable Accoutrements of *Goliath* are considered according to Sense and Reason, he might well with some Sort of Ground vaunt himself in the Manner he did, against the *Israelites*. Nor was it any Wonder, that no Man of common Sense in *Saul's* Army chose to engage in a single Combat with him. Amidst these Circumstances of Perplexity and Dismay, Providence led *David* to the Army; where, having had an Opportunity of seeing this formidable Champion, and of hearing his proud, and *blasphemous* Defiance of the Armies of the living God; the Spirit with which he had by *Samuel* been anointed, was hereby roused in him. He thought, that a Defiance of God's People was equivalent to a Defiance of God himself:—And so it indeed was. From hence, therefore, he concluded

cluded, by a Faith, which was beyond all the Dictates of common Sense and Reason; that, on Account of this Piece of Blasphemy, God would certainly vindicate his own Cause, and check the vain Boaster's Pride. *Who is this uncircumcised Philistine,* (says he) *that he should defy the Armies of the LIVING GOD?* (1 Sam. xvii. 26.) And when Saul, who in this Case judged merely by Sense and Reason, said to David, *Thou art not ABLE to go against this Philistine, to fight with him; for thou art but a Youth, and he is a Man of War from his Youth; David,* animated by that *Experience, which worketh Hope;* relates two successful Encounters he had some Time before had with a Lion and a Bear; and then adds, *Thy Servant slew both the Lion, and the Bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine shall be as one of them, seeing he hath defied the Armies of the living God.* David said moreover, *The Lord, that delivered me out of the Paw of the Lion, and out of the Paw of the Bear, He will deliver me out of the Hand of this Philistine.* (Ver. 33--37.) And tho' Saul, who as King of God's believing People Israel could not quite oppose such an extraordinary Spirit of Faith as this, saying, *Go, and the Lord be with thee!*—Yet did he not expect the Victory in the pure Faith of divine Power, as David did; but was still for equipping him in his own Armour; which, however, David had as little Inclination for, as he had Expectations from: His was from a Sling and Stone *only*. Neither did he rely upon these simple Means, but only so far as God should himself be pleased to second and succeed this natural Dexterity of his. The Sequel, ending in the proud Giant's Defeat by a Stone slung into his Forehead, (his *rational Pride*) after which his Head was cut off with his own Sword; fully indicates the Manner how by Faith alone David *waxed valiant in Fight;* and, as it is recorded (Ver. 34.) *put to Flight the Alien Army of the Philistines.* And



And now let us pass on to another *miraculous* Effect of Faith in the Person of the Prophet *Daniel*; *It stopped the Mouths of Lions.*

*Daniel* was, in every Sense of that Epithet, a great Man, and a Man of God. He had been a wise and faithful Prime-Minister to *Darius* and his Predecessors in the Empire; and (as is but too common in such exalted and difficult Stations, had incurred the usual Tribute of Merit, the Envy and Ill-Will of his Fellow-Courtiers. It seems, that they caballed against him, being fully determined to bring him into Disgrace, and to accomplish his Destruction.—Has it been otherwise in our own Time and Nation?—They could not touch him in Point of the Affairs of the Kingdom; therefore they suggested to the King, by a Piece of Flattery the most absurd, and by Application and Appeal to that, which is apt to be the weakest Side in such great Potentates, that it would greatly tend to the Display and Establishment of his *Dignity*, if from henceforth, until the Expiration of thirty Days, no Petition should be allowed to be made to any God, or Man, excepting to the King himself. The King, for Want of due Discernment and Foresight, swallowed this Bait too greedily; enacting, in the usual *irreversible* Manner of the *Medes* and *Persians*, a Decree and Command to this Purpose, fortifying it with a Sanction or Penalty of being cast into the Lion's Den, in Case of Non-Compliance, and Refusal. The Plotters supposed, what the Event confirmed, that *Daniel's* known Integrity, and faithful Attachment to his God, and the constant Devotions due to him, would surely cause him to incur this grievous Penalty. And it appears, that he persevered notwithstanding in his usual Course as heretofore, *opening the Windows of his Chamber towards the beloved Jerusalem; kneeling upon his Knees*  
three

*three Times a Day, and giving Thanks to God as he aforetime did, (Chapter vi. 10.)* Having then been detected in the very Act, and thereupon accused; and convicted of Disobedience to the Decree of the King, by his inflexible *Constancy* of Obedience to the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords, the Penalty of the Lion's Den *irreversibly* awaited him. The King himself was afterwards sorry enough, but not now able to defeat the Consequences of his own Decree. He now first saw, with very great Regret, that he had been trepanned, and made a Dupe to the Envy of his crafty Courtiers. So then *Daniel* was, merely on Account of his Faith and Obedience, actually cast into the Den of Lions. Whether he himself knew the happy Issue beforehand, is uncertain; but most probably he did not. Perhaps the Thought was first suggested to him by *Darius* himself; who (Ver. 16.) said to him, *Thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee.* This was Something like *Abraham's* Answer to *Isaac's* Question about the Lamb for a Burnt-Offering. *My Son, God will provide himself a Lamb for a Burnt-Offering. (Gen. xxii. 7, 8.)* It was also, in both Cases, like that of *Caiaphas* (John xi. 49--52.) a *Prophecy* unwittingly spoken; for I hardly think that *Darius*, like professing and nominal Believers now-a-days, would have had Faith enough in his own Words to have chosen *Daniel's* Lot, and to have taken *his* Place amongst the Lions: Yet might the discerning and believing *Daniel* have made a good Use of the Hint for his Comfort and Support in this very trying Situation. *Abraham's* Faith had prompted him to account, that the same God, who gave him *Isaac* supernaturally, *was able to raise him up from the dead.* (Ver. 19 of this Chapt.) yet he expected no other, but his real Death first however. Be all this then as it may, *Daniel* certainly persevered in his Faith and Obedience to God, at all Adventures; and we find

find it was in Fact his Good Pleasure in Behalf of his faithful Servant, to honour the Words of *Darius* so far as to stop the voracious Mouths of savage Lions. That these Beasts so readily, and easily dispatched the envious Plotters and Accusers themselves afterwards, was a full Demonstration of God's Interference, by an *Angel*, in this Case; and that it could no Ways be owing to any natural Tameness, or Imbecillity in the Animals themselves. (Ver. 24.) This is then a wonderful Instance of the Power of Faith, *it stopped the Mouths of Lions.*

We will now proceed to the third *marvellous* Instance of Faith's Power; viz. it's *Quenching the Violence of Fire.* This, and the foregoing Effects, are all beyond the Ability of the most mighty Monarch on Earth to imitate. *There is not any Rock, like our God!* (1 Sam. ii. 2.)

*Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*, the believing Servants of the most High God, were, under the *Babylonish* Captivity, by an absurd, and irrevocable Edict of *Nebuchadnezzar*, a despotic *Eastern* Monarch, commanded, in Conjunction with all the People, Nations, and Languages of that Time, to worship a Golden Image of the King; which he had presumptuously set up for that Purpose in the Plain of *Dura*. The Penalty to be inflicted upon Non-Conformity was Nothing less than a fiery Furnace.—A dreadful Alternative this!—It could not be difficult to foresee what Effect this must have had upon all Men of mere Sense and Reason; whose Views, being always terminated by the Horizon of *this World*, could not extend beyond Nature's first Law of *Self-Preservation*. But *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*, tho' Men of as quick Sense and sound Reason as any of their Equals and Contemporaries, were yet Men of true Faith in God,

D

and



and of unbounded Obedience likewise to *his* Commandments. They could not therefore hesitate long, or be long in Determining, what Part they were to act at such an Exigency. They had been ever ready, for Conscience Sake, to pay Obedience to all the lawful Commands of their rightful Sovereign; and were still so: But, whereas, in this unlawful Stretch of his Royal Power against the RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE, WHICH OUGHT EVER TO BE INVOLABLE, they could no longer now obey him *actively*; they were, however, resolved *passively* to resign themselves up to patient Suffering for the Truth; leaving the awful Event wholly to God's own free, and Sovereign Determination and Disposal. For, though it was not clear to them, that God *would*, in this Case, fulfil the Promise made to his People, (Isai. xliii. 2.) *When thou walkest through the Fire, thou shalt not be burnt, neither shall the Flame kindle upon thee.*—Yet *this* they knew with Certainty, that his holy Commandment against Image and Idol-Worship was, on no Account whatsoever, to be transgressed and disobeyed. Being then herein determined, and knowing also, that their God *could* deliver them out of the King's Hands, if he pleased; they did not choose to prescribe, or dictate to his omniscient and omnipotent Love, how, at such a remarkable *Crisis*, it should best provide for it's own Glory. In short, they, by Faith, simply and wholly resigned themselves up unto God. I say *by Faith*, for without it, without this Confidence in God, this *Substance of Things* hereafter *hoped for*, without this internal *Evidence* of an invisible Presence, no other Subject of the King could have *endured* as they did; no other could have chosen to tread the same Path, and follow their Footsteps into so fierce and consuming a Fire. The Sequel is well known, not a single *Hair of their Head was singed*; no, nor had so much as the *Smell of Fire passed on them*. This Faith  
quenched

*quenched it's Violence*, or it's naturally burning and consuming Quality.—Can any one deliver like the God of *Israel*? Did ever any Man *trust* him, and was *confounded*?

Let me now, before I pass on to an awful *Parallel* to these trying Circumstances, to be expected in our Days, make two general Observations upon the alledged Instances of Faith.

1. The *Sadducean* Opinion, as if the *Jews* had had no explicit Belief of a Resurrection to an eternal Life, is by the Instances of *Daniel*, and of *Shadrach*, *Mesbach*, and *Abednego*, fully refuted. The Author of this Epistle has, with a View, no Doubt, to the Martyrdom of *Mattathias*, *Eleazar*, and the *Seven Brethren* with their *Mother*, during the Persecution of *Antiochus Epiphanes*, (a Type of the great Antichrist we are to expect) told us (Ver. 35.) that *Some were tortured, not accepting Deliverance, that they might obtain a better Resurrection*. What better Resurrection, but to an eternal Life *hereafter*? And indeed, the *Seven Brethren* expressly and frequently make Mention of this, in the Midst of their Tortures. (See *I Maccab. ii. 2 Maccab. vi. vii.*) Besides, common Sense will teach us, that if *Daniel*, and the *Rest* had not expected the *same*, they would have accepted Deliverance; and never *ventured* into a Lion's Den, and into a burning fiery Furnace. Without Faith in a better Resurrection, this would have been *Stoical* and *senseless* indeed.

2. *True Faith* does not shew itself in fine Words of Profession only: It must approve itself in Fact, it is properly a *Venture*. Faith, or Confidence in any Man, always shews itself in Fact, by a *Venture*: And it is the same with Faith in God, and *Christ*. The present State of the *Christian* World is like the

common good Opinion we suppose ourselves to entertain of one another's Honesty and Integrity, where we are wholly uninterested, and at a Distance. Such an One is, we think, a mighty good and honest Man:—And why not?—But supposing this good and honest Man should want to borrow Money of us; or desire us to be a Surety for him in a Sum, that might greatly affect our Finances; then we are put to the *Test* by a *Venture*; which will soon discover, both to ourselves and him, how solid and well grounded our Confidence towards him had been. So in *Christendom* we are all born and brought up to a good Opinion of *Jesus Christ*, and of the *Bible-Truths*, that are summed up in his Person. And if any Man were to insinuate the least Suspicion against the *Reality*, and *Sincerity* of our Faith, or that it was not from our Hearts, no greater Indignity could be offered us. There is no describing the Wrath and Resentment, that might ensue from it.—But cool a little!—What hast thou yet *ventured* on this Saviour, and on the Bible-Truths, thou seemest to be so zealous for?—Surely we shall all find, that when this *beloved Saviour* comes to make a *Demand* upon us of our *whole Hearts*; and that HE henceforth should be the *only Lord*, and *Director* of them; when *this Demand* shall be made, either immediately by his Holy Spirit, or mediately by the Servants he shall be pleased to employ;—we shall then surely think *twice*, before we *once* consent to this. Such a Saviour as this will, at first, find very *scrupulous* Followers; and such *faithful* Servants will receive little Thanks for their Service. Would to God, this were not true!—But sad and long Experience has convinced me of the Truth of it.—*All Men have not Faith.* (2 Thess. iii. 2.) Nay, *few* Men have Faith enough to *venture* any Thing of Consequence to them on God.—But to proceed:—

My



My dear Friends! Our Age and Place has not seen any Persecutions for Conscience Sake carried to the Length of those above-described.--- Yet has it been the Lot of our Fore-Fathers, even in *these* Kingdoms; and God only knows how soon it may be so again. I cannot, by this Occasion, forbear to give you a Hint of an *Hour of Temptation*, that is (YET) *to come upon all the World, to try them that dwell on the Earth.* (Rev. iii. 10.) I say, yet to come; and whenever it does come, it will be at an *Unawares*, as a *Snare*, as a *Thief in the Night*, at an *Hour*, when we think not. (Luke xxi. 34, 35. Chapt. xii. 40. Matt. xxiv. 44.) My Brethren, you have heard, that *ANTICHRIST shall come*; you have possibly read of many preceding *Antichrists*; (1 John ii. 18.) you have read of the *Little Horn of DANIEL.* (Chap. vii.) You have read of *Paul's Man of Sin, to be revealed, the Son of Perdition, who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he, as God, sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself, that he is God---that wicked One:* (2 Thess. ii. 3, 4, 8.) You have read of a formidable and remarkable *Beast* in the xi<sup>th</sup>. xiii<sup>th</sup>. xvii<sup>th</sup>. and other Chapters of *John's Revelation*; that he, in *Conjunction* with the *Ten Kings of the Earth*, shall hate the *Whore* of Superstition, or false, mimic Christianity; and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat the *Flesh* of her Temporalities, and burn her with the same *Fire* she has herself before so cruelly burnt many Innocents with. (Rev. xvii. 16.) You have read, (Rev. xiii. 7.) that it will be afterwards given to this *Beast* to make *War* with the *Saints*, and to overcome them; and that *Power* shall be given him over all *Kindreds*, and *Tongues*, and *Nations*; and that all that dwell upon the *Earth* shall worship him, (shall wonder after him, Ver. 3.) whose Names are not written in the *Book of Life of the Lamb slain, from the Foundation of the World.* And you may have read, that

this same *Beast* shall, with the *Ten Kings*, make *War* with the *LAMB*; and that the *LAMB*, being *King of Kings*, and *Lord of Lords*, and they that are with him, called, and chosen, and faithful, shall overcome them. (Chapt. xvii. 14. compared with xix. 11--21.) You have seen every Nerve of verbal Criticism strained to apply the full Completion of all this, and more of the like, to the *Pope*, and to the *Popedom*; tho' endless Inconsistences, and even hurtful Consequences, in Fact, have attended such premature Interpretations.—Let me however not be mistaken, I am not pleading here for the *Pope*, or for the *Popedom*: They have been *Antichristian* enough.—But, by Scripture, it appears clear to me, that the *Degeneracy* and the *Apostacy* are two different Appearances in the World, the one leading to the other: The former is bad enough, but the latter worst of all: To the one belongs the *Mother of Harlots and Abominations*, with all her *Daughters*; and to the other the *Beast*, or the *Antichrist*, by Way of Eminence: This will be the Destruction of that; and, for the Space God has appointed, rise upon her Ruins. This is the State described at large, (Rev. xiii.) and against which, even after the *Fall of Babylon*, we are so awfully warned, as no where else in all the Scripture, (Rev. xiv. 8--12.) Here then will be the *Patience of the Saints*, here will be they that keep the *Commandments of God*, and the *Faith of Jesus*.

On which very Account therefore I have given this Hint. Not that I pretend to know the *Times*, or the *Seasons*, which the Father hath put in his own Power. (Acts i. 7.)—But if the *Signs of the Times* are any Ways to be regarded and attended to in a practical, but not in an inquisitive Way, for Use and not for vain Curiosity; we have now every Reason to be prepared for the worst. We have every Reason to watch and pray, lest we enter into this Temptation.

We

We are commanded by the highest Authority, (and on this very Ground it is, that I have ventured out with this Word to the wise in Heart) *to take Heed to ourselves, lest at ANY TIME our Hearts be overcharged with Surfeiting and Drunkenness, and Cares of this Life,—what is now more prevalent every where?—and so that Day come upon us unawares; since, as a Snare, it is to come on all them that dwell on the Face of the whole Earth.* We have (I repeat it) every Reason to watch and pray ALWAYS, that we may be accounted worthy to escape all these Things, that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of Man. (Luke xxi. 34--36. Rev. iii. 10.)

In Sum, since the Coming of these Things is, from Faith in God's Word, to be expected upon the Earth; since the Time of their Coming is *uncertain*, and will be *sudden*; *what Manner of Persons ought we to be in all holy Conversation and Godliness?* Ought not every wise Man to be ready and provided for every Emergence? Ought he not to learn, in every Class of the Holy Ghost's School of Faith, the Lessons of Trial and Affliction; and thus, by Exercise and Practice, to attain the Faith of a *Daniel*, and of *Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego*, &c.? For Faith, like our Arts and Trades, cannot be learned by Speculation, but by Practice only. The Faith got merely by Books, by the modern, giddy Sermon-Hunting; and by, what a wise Man calls, religious Gossiping, is only a *chimerical Head-Faith*; which may make us very fiery *Bigots*, but cannot help us to overcome the World, or stand in the Day of Trial: But the *Faith in the Grace of God, whereby we are justified, and have Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ; whereby we rejoice in Hope of the Glory of God; whereby we glory in Tribulations; knowing that Tribulation worketh Patience, and Patience Experience, and Experience Hope, that maketh not ashamed;*



*ashamed*;—this is *the Faith of God's Elect*, and the Faith of this whole Chapter. (Rom. v. 1--5.)

In *this Faith* we cannot be too much practised, so as, in Obedience to God, and under patient Sufferings, to meet with all the Trials and Temptations of our own Times; and to come victoriously out of them, as *Daniel*, and *Shadrach*, *Meshaeh*, and *Abed-nega*, &c. did in their's. *Blessed is the Man that ENDURETH Temptation*; holdeth out under it; *for when he is tried, he shall receive the Crown of Life, which the Lord hath promised to them that love him.* (Jam. i. 3, 4, 12.) *Behold, we count them happy that ENDURE. Ye have heard of the Patience of JOB, and the End of the Lord, that the Lord is very pitiful, and of tender Mercy.* (Chapt. v. 11.)

Thus then, my dearest Friends, you see, that true Faith is one of the greatest of Powers and Realities; it approves itself by it's Effects in every Shape. It is a *divine Principle*, as much superior to mere *Sense* and *Reason* as Heaven is to Earth, and God to Man. *As Nothing is impossible to God, so are all Things possible to Faith.* We have the best and most indubitable Authority for the Truth of this Position; not only in the plainest Scripture-Words, but also in Fact, or from the Records of God's believing People, from the Beginning of the World to this very Day. (Mark ix. 23. Luke xvii. 6. Chapt. i. 37.)

Yet, as there is, after all, a great Difference between the *Inspiration* of true Faith, and the Schemes and Practices of a mad, or gloomy *Enthusiasm*; it will be necessary to guard here against two dangerous Extremes of this Sort: The One is a presumptuous *Tempting God*, under the Pretext of Faith, but without it's divine Principle; and the Other

Other a gloomy and sullen *Despair* for Want of proper Attention and Obedience to it. The first loses it's Way, by Out-running it's Guide; and the second does the same, by Lagging too far behind it.' In the Way of our Duty, and proper Call, we are always safe; but, if out of it, we would be prescribing and dictating to the blessed God's omniscient and omnipotent Love; expecting from some false and depraved Turn of Mind, that God should be at our Beck, and (excuse the Expression) dance as it were after our Pipe; this would be a presumptuous and unwarrantable *Tempting of God*, that would surely meet with a Baffle.—But, if in the Way of our Duty, and in Pursuance of our proper Call of Grace, Satan, the World, and the Flesh should at any Time Way-lay, and bring us into great Straits, Embarrassments, and Difficulties; we are then warranted, yea commanded, by the Word of God, to look up to him, in Faith, for Help and Assistance; and to *cast all our Care upon him, that careth for us*. We are there assured, that *he will never leave us, nor forsake us*; and, that *all Things shall work together for our Good*. We are not indeed, even in this Case, to prescribe to God the Time and Manner of his Assistance; but only to believe firmly, that it will most certainly come, at his own Time and in the Way best pleasing to himself. *Whatsoever hath been written aforetime*, (both in the Old and New Testament, and all the wonderous Works of God since recorded in the true and faithful History of the New Testament-Church) has been *all for our Learning*, that we through PATIENCE and Comfort of the Scriptures, and of such Writings might have Hope, the Hope of Faith. (Rom. xv. 4.) And if it has not this Effect, it must be ascribed to the Dominancy of proud Reasoning; which, in Times of Prosperity, may be frantic and exorbitant, but in those of Difficulty and Distress, sink down into  
a fixed

a fixed Sullenness and Gloominess of damnable Despair.

The Scripture affords us Instances of both these *Extremes*, and cautions us to guard against them. When Satan set our Saviour upon a Pinnacle of the Temple, and under a Pretext of Scripture-Faith and it's Exercise, bid him cast himself down from it; he gave the Tempter this Answer out of the Scripture, *Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.* (Matt. iv. 5, 6.) The Israelites often tempted and proved God in the Wilderness, and elsewhere; for which they were severely reprov'd and punished. The Unbelieving Lord, who would not credit *Elisha's* Prophecy of sudden and amazing Plenty in *Samaria*, was trodden to Death for his Unbelief. (2 Kings vii.) *Zachariah* was for his Unbelief struck, and punished, with Dumbness. (Luke i. 20.) *No mighty Works, or Miracles, were done by our Saviour amongst his own Countrymen, on Account of their Unbelief.* (Matt. xiii. 58.) In one Word, the *Jews* forfeited all the Benefits and Blessings of the Gospel itself, on Account of their Unbelief: And thus it remains with them to this Day.

Guarding therefore against the dangerous *Extremes* of *Credulity* and *Presumption* on the one Hand, and of *Incredulity*, and *Despair* on the other; we cannot, according to the general Tenor of Holy Writ, recommend and inculcate *Faith in God* with too much Frequency and Fervour. For the Want of Faith leaves our Hearts and Lives under all the Dearth and Barrenness of a spiritual Winter; whereas it's full and constant Exercise, in all Circumstances, introduces into both all the Fertility and Plenty of a divine Spring and Summer. Our blessed Saviour, who knew this better than any other Man, and was also acquainted with the Godhead, as none have



have before or since been; exhorts us above all Things to have Faith in God. *Have Faith in God,* (says he, Mark xi. 22--24.) *for verily I say unto you, whosoever shall say unto this Mountain, be thou removed, and be cast into the Sea, and shall not doubt in his Heart, but shall believe, that those Things, which he saith shall come to pass, he shall have whatsoever he saith. Therefore, I say unto you, what Things so ever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them.* And thus we see, that Faith is an essential Ingredient in our Prayers. *The Prayer of Faith saves the Sick, effecting and availing much to every other good and beneficial Purpose of the Christian Life.* (James v. 13--17. Chapt. i. 6.)

In short, as our Text, and the whole Chapter sufficiently evince, we begin, continue, and end our Christian Course in and by Faith. *The Righteousness of God is revealed from Faith to Faith, as it is written, the Just shall live by Faith.* (Rom. i. 17.) It brings us from the Mustard-Seed-Degree of it in first Coming to God by Believing that he is, and is a Rewarder of them that diligently seek him, till we actually sit down in our Place with Christ in his Throne. This is beautifully and affectingly exemplified in the Apostle Paul's last Swan-like Song. (2 Tim. iv, 6--8.)

*I am now ready to be offered, and the Time of my Departure is at Hand. I have fought a good Fight,—I have KEPT THE FAITH. Henceforth there is laid up for me a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge shall give me at that Day; and not to me only, but to all them also that love his Appearing.*

Our dearest Lord and Saviour was, when tabernacling in his holy Humanity amongst us, in every Sense, both the Author and Finisher of our Faith. As he

he preached the Doctrine of Faith in God more, and more clearly, than any of his Servants the Prophets had ever done before him; so were his whole Life and his bitter Death the greatest Exemplification, or Pattern of Faith ever before or since exhibited upon the Stage of this World. *Be of good Cheer*, says he, *I have overcome the World.* (John xvi. 33.) And we may also well be of good Cheer, on this Account; for no Precepts or Instructions which even he himself could give to overcome the World, would have ever been of any real Effect to us, if he had not first done it meritoriously *for us* himself; so as that afterwards *the Law of the Spirit of Life in Christ Jesus could have made us free from the Law of Sin and Death.* (Rom. viii. 2.)

Let us then, to conclude, ponder, in the Faith of the Operation of God, the Doctrine, the Life, and Actions; and also the Death and Sufferings of our precious Saviour, as they all stand recorded in the Scriptures of Truth; till we catch a Degree of the same Spirit, Life, and Truth of them all in ourselves; and, entering into all his States, are so *conformed to his Image*, as to be able truly to say, *As he is, so are we in this World.* (1 John iv. 17.)

From the very Nature of our Text, it is easy to perceive, that it was only in and by Faith, that our blessed Lord *increased in Wisdom and Stature, and in Favour with God and Man.* Certainly he dropped his Parents for a While, and went to the Doctors in the Temple about his heavenly Father's Business, in Faith. During this Season, he wrought at his Foster-Father's Trade; (Mark vi. 3.) and afterwards, at his Decease, supported his Mother with the Labour of his Hands, and with the Sweat of his Brow; and did all Things well, in and by Faith. He came in a right, meek and lowly Disposition to his

his Baptism by *John* in *Jordan*; overcame all the Devil's crafty Temptations in the Wilderness; and entered upon the arduous Work of his public Ministry, in and by Faith. He preached, that *Men should repent, and believe the Gospel of the Kingdom of God*; not by *Reason*, but in and by the immeasurable Fullness of the Spirit of Faith. He wrought one and all of his unparalleled Miracles in and by the same Spirit of Faith. He meekly bore Shame, Reproach, and the Contradiction of Sinners, in Faith. Both he and his Disciples walked, in absolute Poverty through the World, in Faith; and, having Nothing, thereby possessed all Things pertaining to Life and Godliness. By Faith he consoled himself under the Backwardness of his Disciples, the Treachery of *Judas*, and his Being forsaken by them all. In Faith he foresaw the Baptism of his bitter Sufferings and Death, and was straitened till it was accomplished. By Faith he kept the *last Passover*, and instituted the *first Lord's Supper* with his Disciples. By Faith in his own Resurrection on the third Day, he cheered both himself and them under the near Prospect of his bitter Passion. By Faith he entered into the Garden of *Gethsemane*; and, in a Sweat of Blood in the Agony of his Soul, offered up thrice repeated *Prayers and Supplications, with strong Crying and Tears unto him that was able to save him from Death*. By and in a Faith never known before, he resigned himself *absolutely* up to his heavenly Father's Will, accepting the bitter Cup, both of inward and outward Sufferings, then presented to him. He could not but by Faith have afterwards put himself in the Way of a treacherous and hypocritical *Judas* at the Head of a rude Rabble; who, with Swords and Staves, came out to take him; as if he had been one of the vilest of Miscreants. By Faith he checked the forward and intemperate Zeal of *Peter*, and healed *Malchus's* Ear. By Faith he struck them



all down to the Ground, and yet yielded himself up into their boisterous Hands. By Faith, and in the Meekness and Patience thereof, he *possessed his Soul*, suffering himself to be dragged from Court to Court; to be falsely accused; to be buffeted; mocked; insulted; spit upon; crowned with a Crown of Thorns; scourged at a Pillar; and harrassed almost to Death: Under all which *Oppression and Affliction, he opened not his Mouth; yea, being brought as a Lamb to the Slaughter, and as a Sheep before her Shearers is dumb, so opened he not his Mouth.* (Isai. liii. 7.) By the Faith, which saw him, who is invisible, he *silently* submitted to be treated as the most vile and blaspheming *Heretic* in the CHURCH, and as the most seditious and turbulent *Rebel* in the STATE; and patiently heard the Judge, with one and the same Breath, pronouncing him innocent, and yet condemning him to the most ignominious and excruciating of Deaths, on the Cross. In this harrassed, exhausted, and forlorn Condition, he, in the same Faith, bore his own Cross, till he sunk under it. In Faith, he meekly and patiently submitted himself to be stripped of all his Raiment; to be laid down upon his Back on the rough Beam of the Cross; to have his Arms extended, and his tender Hands and Feet pierced through with great Nails: And, after the Cross had been reared up, and rammed into the Ground, he hung with the whole Weight of his Body upon them, till painfully and tediously he bled to Death. Being all this While in an Agony of Soul, only known to himself, and under the Dereliction of his heavenly Father's cheering Countenance; he yet, in a Faith, now arrived to it's highest Pitch, with a loud and bitter Cry, cleaves to him to the last, in these remarkable and affecting Words, *My God, my God! Why hast Thou forsaken me?* At length when the Simplicity of Faith had now perfectly run out it's

Race:

Race; and all was finished, requisite for our Salvation; his last and crowning Act of it was *again with a loud Voice to bow his Head, and die; with these remarkable Words; Father, into thy Hands I commend my Spirit.* (Luke xxiii. 46.)

O dear Souls! Since *Faith cometh by Hearing, and Hearing by the Word of God*, may this *Process* of the meritorious Faith of the Son of Man, which the Holy Spirit by the Scripture sets before our Eyes, enkindle the same Fire of obedient Faith within our Hearts too! And may the all-atoning *Blood of the Lamb of God* so take the Sin of the World away, in our Hearts, and reconcile us to God; that, according to *Stephen's Pattern* (Acts vii. 59, 60.) we, at the End of all Distress, may have Nothing else to do but to say likewise, *Lord Jesus receive our Spirit!*

Now then, having thus lived and died in Faith, our blessed Saviour's Resurrection to the Glory of the Father was, from the very Nature of God's Truth, and of the *divine Patient* himself, quite indefeasible. Let us also, amidst the Trials of Life, and in the Hour of our Death, ever remember in Faith, that *Jesus Christ of the Seed of David was raised from the Dead, according to the Testimony of the Gospel.* (2 Tim. ii. 8.) It will be needful enough for us to have both his *Death* and his *Resurrection* ever in Remembrance; the one for the *Mortification* of our old Man, and the other for the *Vivification* of the New.

By all these adorable Transactions, and by his victorious *Exit* on the Cross, our Lord and Saviour has blotted out the *Hand-Writing of Ordinances*, that was against us, and was contrary to us; taking it out of the Way, and nailing it to his Cross. He has spoiled *Principalities and Powers*, and made a *Shew of them openly*,  
E 2
triumphing

*triumphing over them in himself. (Col. ii. 14, 15.) He has hereby reconciled us to God. (2 Cor. v. 18.) He is now the Captain of our Salvation, made perfect through Sufferings. (Heb. ii. 10.) And having been, in this wonderful Way, made perfect, he is now the Author of eternal Salvation to all that obey him, in the Obedience of similar Faith. (Heb. v. 9. Rom. xvi. 26.) He is likewise able to save all them to the uttermost, who come unto God by him: That is, who draw nigh to him, just as they are, with a true Heart, and in full Assurance of Faith; seeing that he ever now liveth to make Intercession for them. (Heb. vii. 25. Chapt. x. 22.)*

Thus hath our dear and precious Lord *Jesus Christ*, the *Second Adam*, undone by *Faith*, all the Mischief, the *First Adam*, did by *Unbelief*: And, let us ever remember this, that *Christ* hath not only by his verbal Doctrine of Having Faith and a good Confidence towards God, unto all well-pleasing; but he has also, by the most consummate Exercise and Pattern of it in his own divine and human Person, shewed us how *we* are also to take up *our Cross*, and follow him, in the same Faith and Patience:—The Way of Salvation by the Cross of *Jesus*, though to REASON Foolishness, will ever to FAITH remain the Wisdom of God, and the Power of God. The Way of the Cross will ever also be the Royal Road to the Crown: And the Motto of our victorious Captain's Banner will, until all Imperfection shall be swallowed up in Perfection and Glory, and until Death shall be no more, ever be, NO CROSS NO CROWN!

Observe, however, that we are not to make a Display of the Cross of Christ in Words only, and as an outwardly distinguishing Doctrine: For too many Unregenerate Ones have thus Cross enough  
of



of this Kind ; it is not enough to talk finely of it, as of a Matter merely done withoutside of our own-selves, whilst at the same Time we still *walk after the Lust of the Flesh, the Lust of the Eye, and the Pride of Life* : No, no ; but we are thereby to be ourselves inwardly *crucified to the World, and the World to us*, as Paul was ; we are thereby to *crucify the Flesh with it's Affections, and Lusts*, if we are and would be *Christ's* indeed. (Gal. ii. 20. v. 24. vi. 14.) And, as our Saviour obtained *his* Victory over the World under the Faith and Patience of the Cross, we cannot possibly, obtain it after him, in any other Way. It is impossible to read the *New Testament* impartially without being convinced of this, as a capital and fundamental Truth. In the *seven Epistles* addressed from Heaven by our Saviour himself to the *Seven Churches of Asia*, (Rev. ii. iii.) this Conquest by the Faith and Patience of the Cross, as it first passed in our divine Head, is by a *sevenfold* Exhortation urged upon every one of his *militant* Members too, and backed with exceeding great and precious Promises to the Victors.—Was then such an Exhortation given, were such Promises made in Vain ? Were they not then, and are they not now at least equally necessary ? The iii<sup>d</sup>. Chapter, Ver. 21. indisputably evinces this, *To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with me in my Throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his Throne.*

O then, that we all, *rightly dividing the Word of Truth, the Gospel of our Salvation*, both as it respects first the indispensably necessary Grace in the Head, done meritoriously *without* and *for us* his Members, and the effectual Energy of the same *within us*, (they being in their own Nature both intended to be inseparable)—O that we may, in Faith, all of us, live together with Jesus here, having been first dead together with him by the same Faith ;

go (pursuant to our Baptism) into the Grave together with him, in Faith: And, though buried and lost to the World, rise out of it again to God in his own Life, together with him, by Faith; ascend together with him in Heart and Affections, by Faith, to the Right Hand of God, sitting with him there in heavenly Places; until, at his promised Descension, and Appearance here, we shall also, in full Sight and Fruition, appear together with him in Glory.

Thus have I, my dearest Friends! feebly but honestly, according to my small present Degree of actual Faith, and Hope of further and future Increase of it, explained to you the great Importance and indispensable Necessity of Faith; if, by a real Coming or Conversion to God, we sincerely intend and wish to please him, in this Vale of Tears. Do we this now, the Time can be at no great Distance, when *all Tears shall be wiped away from our Eyes, and there shall be no more Death, neither Sorrow, nor Crying, neither shall there be any more Pain; all former Things under the Fall, being then passed away.* (Rev. xxi. 4.) O blessed are they, who are in such a Case, blessed are the People, who have now, by Faith, the Lord for their God: Blessed are they indeed, for they shall *hereafter* have him for their Portion, in one unclouded Sight of Glory, from Everlasting to Everlasting.

May God grant this to us all, for *Jesus Christ's* Sake, our only Mediator and Advocate. Amen, and Amen!

## The P R A Y E R.

**O** LORD, thou God of infinite Love and Faithfulness ! I have now been speaking long enough on thy Behalf with *Men*, my Fellow-Sinners ; let me now speak on their Behalf and on my own, with *Thee*. Thou knowest, that, after all that has been, or ever can be said with Words ; none of us will ever suspect, that we are born and bred up with such an evil Heart of *Unbelief* in departing from the Living God : Much less, that it is a Sin of a Nature so heinous ; unless thy own eternal Spirit of Love and Truth should convict, and make us inwardly sensible of it. O then, whenever *He* does this, may *we* be willing to be convicted by him ; heartily willing, to be convicted of Sin, because we do not yet *really* believe in the *crucified Jesus*.

O may these important Matters, whereof we have been now stammering, be seen and felt to be eternal, essential, and most interesting Realities, within our Hearts. Thou knowest, that the *Idols* of our Hearts must first be removed to make Way for the *true* and *living God* : O then pull down and destroy every Thing in us, which, in any Shape whatsoever, setting itself up under the Name of *Faith* ; is still, at Bottom and in Reality, Nothing else but *Unbelief*, and the very strong Holds of *Satan* in us. Cast down then our *own* Imaginations, and every high Thing, which exalteth itself against the Knowledge of God ; till every Thought in us be brought into Captivity, and Obedience to thy Holy Child *Jesus*. O Lord, we know experimentally, that no Man can call *Jesus* LORD, by any manly Powers of his own ; it must be by the Holy Ghost. We are not satisfied with only Saying unto thee, Lord, Lord ! with our Lips, not doing what thou sayest. We want to call Thee LORD from the very Ground and Bottom of our Hearts ; in such a Way, that Thou, who diedst for us, mayest indeed be the only Lord and Ruler of all our Thoughts, Words, and Works henceforth and for evermore.

O thou Holy Child *Jesus* ! let us see and feel, that in thy dear Person is all the Fulness of the Godhead bodily ; and all it's beneficial Operations too, both for the Bodies and Souls of Men, through Time and to all Eternity. May *thy* Childhood make *us* Children, such little Children, as can enter into the Kingdom of God. Out of the Mouths of Babes and Sucklings hast thou ordained Strength because of thine Enemies, and that thou mayest still the Enemy, and the Avenger.

O gracious



O gracious God! so far as thou hast made me a Child, and any Thing here has been delivered in thy own Child-like Spirit of Truth, make it, I beseech thee, effectual towards the Promotion of that Kingdom of happy little Children; which thou, who knowest all Things, knowest that I love in my Heart, and wish to see more and better promoted both in myself and others. May then this feeble Effort be blessed to this End by the same Power, which raised up Jesus our Lord from the Dead. Amen, and Amen!

The following BOOKS, (published by the Author) may be had at the same Places with this.

PSALMATA Joan: Serrani Græca, multimetra, Latine reddita. 5s.

The NATURE and NECESSITY of the NEW CREATURE in CHRIST, 4d.

DAWNINGS of the EVERLASTING GOSPEL LIGHT. 2s. stitched.

The LOVE-CONQUEST, or the LITTLE STRENGTH of PHILADELPHIA. 18d.

Select PASSAGES from W. LAW's WRITINGS, verified. 18d.

MEMOIRS of the LIFE, &c. of JACOB BEHMEN. 2s.

The DIVINE VISIONS of JOHN ENGELBRECHT, 2 Vols. 3s.

A DISPLAY of GOD's WONDERS done upon the same, in Verse. 2d.

The distinguished PRE-EMINENCE of the SON of MAN. 2d.

PROPOSALS for a THEOSOPHIC REPOSITORY of EXPERIMENTAL TRUTH, 2d.

A LETTER to every Honest and good HEART. 1d.

A NARRATIVE of GOD's Gracious DEALINGS with HIEL. 2s.

7 AP 66

